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NINE GEMS
from the
JAGADGURU OF SRINGERI

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SRI SARADA PEETAM
SRINGERI

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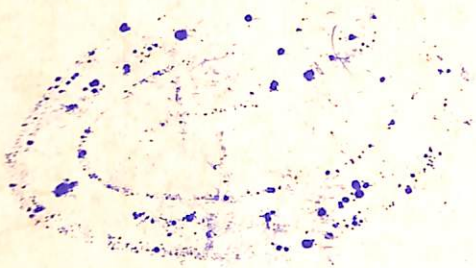

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NINE GEMS

from the

JAGADGURU OF SRINGERI

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PREFACE

This book contains the translation of nine essays of our Acharyal, His Holiness the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri. The essays were prepared by Acharyal many years ago, in Kannada. A Tamil translation of the same was published some months back but copies were sold out rapidly. The demand for an English version of the same is responsible for this book. The translation and editing work were undertaken and carried out in a short time by my good friend P. N. Neelakantan. I am thankful to Sri R. Balasubramanian of Sri Ramakrishna Press, Bangalore-4, for undertaking to print the book in a short while and having done so with personal interest. Last but not least, I would like to express my thanks to Sri K. Srinivasan and Sri H. N. Shankar for doing the proof correction.

Madras
15-8-1982

R. M. Umesh
Press Secretary to
Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri

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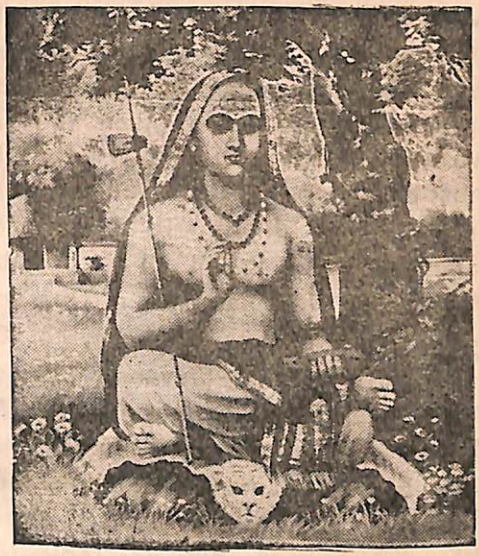

SHANKARA

From time immemorial, the Vedas which are like the breath of Ishwara have existed for the spiritual and material benefits of all. Based on the Vedas, the Smritis have also been written. By 'time immemorial' we mean the time since man appeared in this world. We learn from the Sastras and our tradition that the Lord had taught us the Vedas for our betterment. The Vedas teach us

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Karmas that are to be done by the physical body. Upasanas to contemplate on the laws that govern the world, and Jnana to realise the true nature of the One who created the world. At various places, importance is given to each of these-Karmas, Upasanas and Jnana. it is only natural that when the importance of one is stressed upon, the others are not given the same importance. If we wish for material and wordly pleasures, importance must be given to Karmas and Upasanas. But the bes among them is Jnana. To attain Jnana, Karmas and Upasanas are used. It will not be possible to attain Jnana, if one stops with Karma and Upasana. Many centuries ago, importance was given only to Karma and Upasana, The causes of Jnana-Sravana (Hearing advices from the Guru), Manana (Cogitating) and Nididhyasana (one) pointed concentration on it) were neglected and people were leading a mechanical existance. In those days, people felt that it was possible to attain the higher good (Sreyas) merely by their own logic. As a result, religious which were not based on the Vedas, but created by mind, came into being. The reasans for this are many.

भक्ष्याद्यनियम इति रागिणः, स्वेच्छया दारपरिग्रह इति कुतर्काभ्यासिनः, कर्मलाघवमित्यलसाः, इतःपतितानामप्यस्त्यनुप्रवेश इति अनन्यगतिकाः

(People having desires (change faith) because of freedom in food habits etc., perverted people (change faith) because of freedom in marriage; lazy people (change faith) because of decreased duties and the desperate people (change faith) because of acceptance of even fallen ones).

Due to these reasons, people had trodden the wrong path. If each one were to arrive at a different

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conclusion as one's reasoning dictates, how can one achieve that which is held by all as proper conclusion?

कैश्चिदभियुक्तैर्यत्नेनोत्प्रेक्षितास्तर्का
अभियुक्ततरैरन्यैं-राभास्यमाना दृश्यन्ते ।

(What some intelligent people show by their effort as right is shown to be wrong by more intelligent people). The following we must remember : There is a God. Even when he created people, simultaneously He must have given them His Commands. It is only natural. Even as a king who wishes to rule must lay down his laws, we must have our Sastras. Further, according to that Sastra, there must be fruits of actions. If God were to rule over His people without first laying down the rules it will not make sense. It would be like trying to ride a horse without reins. With the advent or religions not based on the Vedas, the faith of people in the Vedas was fast decreasing. It was at this time there appeared on the banks of the river Purna, in a place sanctified by a temple of Lord Krishna, in a holy and pure family, Adi Sankara Bhagavatpadal.

He had learnt all the Sastras at His very young age. As a result of His Jnana, He had no desire for any material or wordly pleasures. He was also of the opinion that the religions which had not been based on the Vedas must not be spared. He was the only son of His parents and His father was dead. But He was desirous of the betterment of the world. He was a Saint.

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् ।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

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(He belongs to me He is different. People who think thus are narrow-minded. For broad-minded people-the entire world is their family).

Sankara was an example of this. It seems that this saying of the ancients has come alive in the form of Sri Bhagavatpadal. It was also not very correct to wound his mother by going away. At this time, when He was bathing in the Purna river, He was caught by a crocodile Sankara cried out for His mother. She came and was stunned. Sankara told her, "Sanyasa means granting fearlessness to all. This crocodile has caught me only because of its fear of me in some matter. If I am harmless to everybody, this crocodile will let me go. For that I must take up Sanyasa. So, you must permit me to take up Sanyasa." The helpless mother had to accede to his wishes. He who has unattached to anything went in search of a Guru to the banks of ths river Narmada There he obtained Sanyasa from the Great sage Govinda Bhagavatpada. From His Guru. Sankara obtained the Adyatmika Vidya in a proper manner. Only if one learns from the Guru it will be proper.

Sankara's Guru was surprised and pleased on seeing some of Sankara's powers, For the benefit of the world His Guru commanded Him to write a commentary on the Brahma Sutra. According to His Guru's wishes, Sankara wrote commentaries on the Brahma Sutra, Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. Further, He also wrote commentaries on the Swetaswatara Upanishad, Sanatsujatheeyam (found in the Mahabharatha). He also wrote many other books. He made it clear that the all-pervading Brahman was the only reality. That, He said, was the Ultimate Truth. Sankara's Bhashyas

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contain beautiful examples. Only the people who are knowledgeable enough to comment on the Sastras can understand His books clearly. All types of logicians objections have been clearly answered by Sankara in His books. Further, these books give great pleasure to the Pandits. But it was not for the benefit of the Pandits alone that Sankara appeared on the earth. Adi Sankara was of the opinion that everyone must benefit and everyone must cross the ocean of Samsara. For this. He wrote many books like Vivekachoodamani. Upadesa Sahasri, Prabodha Sudhakara etc. It does not take many days to read these books. Further it is also not necessary to have knowledge of the Sastra. to underttand what is written in these books. Knowledge of Sanskrit and sincerity will be sufficient to know what He has said in these books. Sankara was born in Kerala Hence his mother-tongue must have been the language of that land. But He did not write in that language because He was very broad-minded. At that time, Pandits all over India were using Sanskrit. The Pandits were also very conversant with the language. Hence for the benefit of the entire country, He wrote His books in Sanskrit. The source of all Dharmas is the Veda. The Vedas are in Sanskrit. It is, therefore; only proper that Sankara wrote his books in Sanskrit. Bhagavatpadal did not come to propagate a new religion of his own. That is usless too. "What are the vedic principles? Can we neglect them? If we neglect them we will get no benefit. If we neglect them, we would not have the knowledge of the truth"—Such were His teachings and not or new faith or religion. How would it have been proper for Sankara to clarify what is given in the Vedas in any other language when the Vedas themselves were

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in Sanskrit? not everybody has discrimination, dispassion, six-fold wealth comprising of mental control etc.and intense desire for Moksha. Thus, these people do not possess the qualifications for doing the Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana necessary for the attainment of Jnana from the Vedas. These people must also benefit. If one has the blessings of the Lord, one can attain everything without effort. Hence He wrote a book on Mantra Sastra called the 'Prapancha Saram'. He was of the good intention that everyone must pray to the Devatas, obtain the blessings of the Lord and thus attain a good state in this world and the next. He wanted that these people should also obtain knowledge of Vedanta Tattava by the grace of the Devata. It was such a great resolve that led Him to compose hymns. Sivanandalahari and Soundaryalahari and the like are such that anyone may derive benefit by reading them. Bhagavatpadal toured India twice from the Sethu in the South to the Himalayas in the North. With His intelligence and knowledge He was able to convince all Pandits. At that time there were many different faiths. Sankara made them follow the Vedas and advised, them — "Whether you pray to Siva Vishnu, Devi, Sun, Ganapathy or to any deity, in reality it is the Ultimate Being which is Sat-chit-ananda that you are praying to". Each one may pray according to one's taste.

एकं सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति

(Brahman is one. Sages speak of it in many ways). We should not forget this truth. Dharmabhoomi is not merely the district to which we belong. "Entire India is Dharmabhoomi", He said. He established four Maths in the North, South, East and West of India and gave each a Mahavakya. Even today we can see these Maths by which He established the unity of India.

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But for him, we would not have had the Vedas, the Siva-Vishnu temples in their present form. People would not have had the knowledge they have today of Dharmas but for Sankara. For the Jiva which is about to be imprisoned in Samsara, to attain freedom and the Ultimate Bliss, Sankara has taught and blessed all Among His teachings is the "Moha Mudgara". Let us see a Sloka from this.

त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णु-
व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्यसहिष्णुः।
सर्वस्मिन्नपि पश्यात्मानं
सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदज्ञानम् ॥

(In me, in you, in everybody, the same Lord dwells unnecessarily you get angry with me. See the Atman in everybody. Throw away the awareness of differences everywhere).

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ISHWARA

The entity called mind is swifter than the wind. It is capable of moving faster than light. No activity of the mind is stable. Every moment the mind keeps changing its form. The activities of the mind are termed in the Sastras as 'Vrittis'. Some Vrittis are termed as desires. 'I Need this; and I need that; I need objects, this day I built a house, tomorrow I must possess lands and the day after I should become a Lakhier'-such thoughts are called

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as desires. In our life they appear in our minds continuously. We use our body, mind and speech for the fulfilment of desires. However, if we analyse a little bit, it will appear as if desires have no end at all. That is why our ancestors have said—

एको वष्टि शतं शती दशशतं लक्षं सहस्राधिपः
लक्षेशः क्षितिपालतां क्षितिपतिर्वित्तेशतां वाञ्छति।
वित्तेशः सुरराजतां सुरपतिर्ब्रह्मास्पदं वाञ्छति
ब्रह्मा विष्णुपदं हरिः शिवपदं ह्याशावधिं को गतः॥

(One with a rupee longs for hundred, one with a hundred rupees longs for a thousand. One with a thousand longs for a lakh rupees; a lakhier wishes to become a king; a king wishes to become Kubera; Kubera wishes to become Indra; Indra desires the state of Brahma; Brahma desires the state of Vishnu; Vishnu desires the state of Shiva....who has reached the limit of desires..... ?).

Ordinary people desire food, wealth and land. Those with knowledge of Sastras desire heaven, the world of Brahma etc. Even those who are bereft of Lokeshana (desire for the world) Vittheshana (desire for wealth) and Putreshana (desire for the son) desire Moksha. The joy that children find in playing is not found in us. Seeing children we state that they are not possessed of much intelligence.

On the other hand, we find delight in wordly dealings. Someone strives to attain fame. Someone strives to attain wealth. Another one desires knowledge. Everyone has a desire and feels that his is more important than that of another. Those desirous of Moksha leave these

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petty desires and live with better ideas. Just as the grown-ups do not engage in the frolic of children, so too those desiring Moksha do not engage themselves in these types of desires; but they too are desirous of Moksha. It is not wrong to say that everyone lives with some desire or another. No one spends even a moment without desire at all.

By efforts, desires do not find total consummation. Even if the desires are fulfilled worries too keep increasing. Many are the wealthy people who are capable of bestowing wordly benefits. They do bestow such fruits (should we seek refuge in such people?). An example can be cited for this. The example will be that of a patient suffering from tuberculosis going to a doctor who himself is suffering from the same tuberculosis. When even wordly Lords themselves are possessed of desires and are not free from worries, how can they fulfill the desires of others? About such a situation, Bhartrihari has said :

मौनान्मूकः प्रवचनपटुः.....

(.....As dumb if silent and a chatter box if talking well).

Hence we should seek refuge only in an all-powerful One who has attained total freedom from all bondages. Such a One though not seen with gross eyes can be seen with divine insight. About such an Ishwara Bhagavatpadal has said-

अरहसि रहसि स्वत-त्रबुद्धथा
वरिवसितुं सुलभः प्रसन्नमूर्तिः ।
अगणितफलदायकः प्रभुर्मे
जगदधिको हृदि राजशेखरोऽस्ति ॥

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(In the open and in secret, He is easy to live with, with a mind that is independent. He has a form that is gracious. He is the giver of immeasurable benefits. He exceeds the world. Such a Lord, the crescent-crested one resides in my heart).

He has pointed out that it is easy to live with this King of kings. Let us analyse the nature of such an Ishwara. By our senses we experience various objects. Knowledge arises by means of 'Pratyaksha' on direct perception and sometimes by inference. Seeing a beautiful idol we realise that the one who made it should have had great skill. This is inference. From such experiences it can be conclusively learnt that for any effect there should be one who has brought about that effect The 'Pramana' that has been used here is 'Anumana'. It is accepted that the world such as earth should have been created sometime or the other. That which is bereft of origination and annihilation cannot be cognised by the senses. If it be concluded that world such as earth etc had an origination then it follows that it should have had a Creator. Such a Creator we term—Ishwara. If things go on well in a kingdom do we not conclude that there should have been a good king? In the world we see spring, summer and the rainy seasons coming in succession. In the spring season the Jasmine flower and in other seasons flowers appropriate to those seasons are seen. The sun and the moon give light at the appropriate times and produce beneficial effects in the world. In the time of our fathers, grand-fathers and the great-grand-fathers, the same rules were applicable. It is clear that the laws governing the universe are invariant. All creatures have appropriate limbs. It is not as if one has eyes in one particular way and another has them in a completely different manner. Who is the one who has

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brought about these regulations? Is He the consciousness that is inherent in the objects itself, or is He superior to the consciousness that inherits the objects? Some scientists using pseudo-logic try to establish that the tests of concordance and discordance are satisfied with regard to consciousness and objects. But concordance and discordance are not found there. There should be a distinct entity who has created these objects. That one we call Ishwara. Ishwara means one who is possessed of great powers. The Veda has said :

एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने सूर्यचन्द्रमसौ विधृतौ तिष्ठतः

(As per the command of this Imperishable One, the Sun and the Moon are there.)

भीषाऽस्माद्वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः । भीषाऽस्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च । मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ।

(But of fear of Him the wind blows. Out of fear of Him the Sun rises. Out of fear of Him Agni, Indra and Mrutyu carry out their respective functions). This is how the Veda elucidates that there is a Regulator for the Universe. This Regulator is Ishwara. This is the Aishwarya (glory) of Ishwara.

(That is Brahman from which the origination of the world etc takes place) So has Veda Vyasya clarified. From this it is concluded that Ishwara exists. Analysing the nature of Ishwara, Maharishi Patanjali has said ;—

क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः ।

(That special Purusha who has no connections with Ignorance, actions, their results, and Samskara is called Ishwara). Klesha means Ignorance etc. Karma means mixed type of activities. Vipaka means effect, class, lifetime etc. Akshaya means Samskara or tendency. Ishwara means one who is unassociated with these. Thus has he said and described Ishwara.

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The Yogic School

The followers of the Yogic school of thought accept duality. They hold that Prapancha and the Atma are distinct. In their Sutras, Ishwara is spoken of as one distinct from Jiva. In the Yoga philosophy it is said that this world ensued as a result of a modification of Prakriti. If this be accepted then the question whether a Purusha is necessary may arise. We see a pot. The pot is made of inert mud. But to make it, a person is needed. Likewise, if Prakriti is to be modified it needs a Purusha. If it is said that inert Prakriti gets modified, then it is to be accepted that a Purusha is required for that modification. If we do not accept this it will violate the laws that we behold. So we cannot accept the Yoga Philosophy in its totality.

The Vedantic School :

In the Vedantic school it is said that Atma alone is real and all else is mere appearance. If the Atma and the Prapancha were to be total non-entities then no object should be graspable by the senses. Just as it is possible to mistake a rope for a snake, so too is the Supreme mistaken for the world. The essence of the illustration is that just as on account of ignorance a snake is born of a rope, so does the world seem to emerge from the Supreme. Brahman alone is the Supreme Reality. In That alone is this world imagined. It is this world alone that we are beholding. The cause of the world is Maya alone. Inert Maya cannot do anything by itself. He who creates, sustains and destroys by means of this Maya is Ishwara. Hence the cause of the world should be Maya and He who controls it is Ishwara.

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In the Svetasvatara Upanishad it is said—

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम्

(Know Maya to be the Prakriti and the controller of the Maya to be the Great Lord).

Where there is the power of knowledge, we find the presence of consciousness. Ishwara is of the form of consciousness. In stone, mud etc there is no awareness. Therefore they are termed inert. In animals, birds etc, since they have the power of knowing it should be conceded that there is consciousness in them. In animals the power of knowledge is limited. In men it is slightly more. Where there is power of discrimination there it must be said that the power of knowledge is greater. Where such special knowledge is not found it should be conceded that there is only ordinary knowledge. Even in man who is possessed of knowledge there are various forms of ignorance.

न हि सर्वः सर्वं जानाति

(Everyone does not know everything.) Even when there is a special form of knowledge in a man there has to be some ignorance or the other in him. In no man we find the limit of knowledge or omniscience. Animals have only limited knowledge. Stones do not have even that much knowledge, Where can we find the absolute limit of knowledge? We can find it only in Ishwara. In Ishwara there is no such thing called ignorance. The Yogis say-

तत्र निरतिशयं सार्वज्ञ्यबीजम्

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(In Ishwara there is the seed of limitless knowledge about everything) It must be admitted that Ishwara is the door of everything and the possessor of all powers. The Vedas expound the means to happiness in this world and the next.

अस्य महतो ऋतस्य निश्वसितमेतत्.....

(These Vedas are like the breath of the Eternal....) From such words of the Veda it is clear that even these Vedas accrued from Ishwara. If Ishwara were to be the source of the Veda which itself reveals everything then it is to be conceded that He is Omniscient.

The Veda says about the Ishwara—

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित्

(He who knows things in there generality and particularity). By such utterances it is declared that Ishwara to be Omniscient. Vedavyasa has described the form of Ishwara in His Brahmasutras. Through the Veda and by means of inference it should be concluded that there is an all knowing Ishwara. Many wordly words are also indicative of Ishwara. The word 'Bhagavan' Indicates Ishwara alone.

उत्पत्तिञ्च विनाशञ्च भूतानामागतिं गतिम् ।
वेत्ति विद्यामविद्याञ्च स वाच्यो भगवानिति ॥

(He is Bhagavan who knows about the origination the destruction, the coming and the going of beings as well as knowledge and ignorance.)

From this we can conclude that the word Bhagavan is indicative of Ishwara.

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He who has Maya for His powers is Ishwara Maya has three qualities. 'Just as Maya produces ignorance in us it produces ignorance in Ishwara'. To think thus is erroneous. We who are slaves of Maya are alone deluded by it. Ishwara who rules over Maya is not subject to such delusion. This can be explained by an example. In a magic show, for us the observers, there may be delusion. But not to the magician who performs that magic show.

In accordance with the karmas of the beings Ishwara assigns them bodies. If it is accepted that Ishwara has a body then it must necessarily be conceded that He too has joys and sorrows. Is there anything wrong in accepting that Ishwara has a body? The Veda has pointed out that when there is a body there must be joy and sorrow. Hence it is erroneous if it is accepted that Ishwara too has a body.

न ह वै सशरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रिययोरपहतिरस्ति

(He who has a body cannot have dissociation with that which is desired and that which is not desired). Such an utterance of the Veda shows that there must be sorrow if there is a gross body. What about the incarnation of the Lord?

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ।।

(Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet ruling over My own nature, I am born by My own Maya).

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From this it is clear that only on account of His power of Maya Ishwara gets a body. He is subject to no bondage. For this is there any example? Yes the magic show is indeed an example. It is wrong to say that Ishwara is subject to sorrow and joy. From the utterances of the Gita it must be accepted that He has incarnations. Further, the Veda too says :

अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते

(The unborn One manifests multifariously).

Why should one who is devoid of bondage take recourse to incarnation? Ishwara Himself has elucidated the reason. To take upon Himself the incarnations, compassion alone is the reason.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ।।

(Whenever there is a decay of Dharma, O! Bharata, and an ascendency of Adharma, then I manifest Myself). Therefore it is only for the benefit of the people that Ishwara takes upon Himself incarnations. By such bodies, no bondage is created created for Him. By origination and destruction of such bodies as well as by the sorrow and joy associated with these bodies no bondage is produced in Ishwara. The bodies of Rama and Krishna serve as illustrations of such incarnations. They had taken human bodies only for the sake of the benefit of the world.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसम्भवम् ।।

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(Whatever being is glorious, prosperous or strong, know that to be a manifestation of a part of My Splendour). From such utterances and from the utterances of the Itishasa and Puranas we must accept that the bodies of Rama, Krishna and others were indeed Divine incarnations We must accept that they were incarnations of the Lord.

Differentiation between Siva and Vishnu

Maya has three qualities. Having in mind these three qualities and with an idea to make it easy for the worshippers, the Sastras speak of three forms of the Lord with three different names. From the standpoint of the absolute, there is no difference between Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

शिवाय विष्णुरूपाय शिवरूपाय विष्णवे

(Salutations to Shiva who is of the form of Vishnu, and to Vishnu who is of the form of Shiva).

यथा शिवमयो विष्णुरेवं विष्णुमयः शिवः

(Just as Vishnu is of the essence of Shiva, so too is Shiva of the essence of Vishnu) Thus has it been said : Though the Great Lord is One who is bereft of qualities and defects, He is spoken of as three-fold in the Puranas on account of activities such as Creation etc. Indeed such an Ishwara is spoken of in the Vedas as-

सत्यकामः सत्यसङ्कल्पः

(He whose desire is unfailing and He whose resolve is unfailing). Hence by Vedas, the words of the Itihasas and Puranas and on account of our own experience it is

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accepted that there is an Ishwara who is responsible for the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world, who confers grace upon all, and thinking of whom one attains higher good. Such being the situation, on account of some misfortune, there are some who forget such an Ishwara. The reason is their attachments to wordly objects. Thus engaging themselves in transitory joy they forget the Ishwara who bestows the eternal bliss upon us.

लब्ध्वाऽपि कामधेनुं ते लाङ्गले विनियुंजते ।

(Even on obtaining the wish-fulfilling Kamadhenu, He uses it for ploughing). Such is the case with them.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु

(Fix the mind on Me; be devoted to Me; do the sacrifice for My sake; bow down to Me). Accoraing to these words we should lead our lives.

अरहसि रहसि स्वतन्त्रबुद्ध्या...

(In the open and in secret, with a mind that is independent.....).

To that Ishwara who is spoken of in this Sloka let us offer our Salutations.

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The Relationship between Ishwara and the Universe

पिता यथा रक्षति पुत्रमीश जगत्पिता त्वं जगतः सहायः ।
कृतापराधं तव सर्वकाले कृपानिधे मां शिव पाहि शंभो ॥

(O Shiva ! O Sambu ! You are the Father of the entire creation as well as the substatrum of the manifested universe! Just as the Father protects his son, O Merciful Lord, protect me at all times even If I am Sinful)

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After having determined that Ishwara is devoid of qualities (Nirguna), the questions which arise are :— What is the relationship between Ishwara and us? What is our duty owing to this relationship? Let us analyse these questions.

Relationship between Ishwara and us :—

All the religions of the world are agreed upon the fact that Ishwara is the Father of the universe. In the Bhagavd Gita, addressing Lord Krishna, Arjuna says,

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥

(You are the Father of this world the moving and the stationary. You indeed are to be adored by this (world). You are the Greatest Guru (for) Your equal does not exist: Where then is one superior to you, in the three worlds, O being of unequalled greatness?)

Thus it is observed that the relationship between Ishwara and us is the same as the relationship between a Father and a Son. What qualities do we perceive in a Father?

As He, Ishwara, protects His Children and feeds them, He is indeed the Father. Other fathers are merely the causes of their childrens' births. One who renders guidance in the path of Salvation (Sanmarga), provides food and gives freedom from fear is called the 'Father'. It appears as if Iswara created the Sun, the Moon and the

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like to remove the fear of darkness. For the happiness of the Jivas, Iswara created rivers, fields, food etc. Further He taught us the Path of Salvation (Sanmarga) Just as the father offers advice to his child in the beginning, Ishwara also taught us the Veda in the beginning of creation.

स भगवान्···मरीच्यादीन् अग्रे सृष्ट्वा

(That Ishwara having created Marichi and others before....) Thus says the Gita Bhashya.

Discussion about other Religions :—

In what manner did Ishwara teach us the path of salvation? All the other religions have their own scriptures. Rightful actions and sinful actions have been described in them. It may appear that if we conduct our life in accordance with these scriptures only, salvation can be attained. But then did those people who wrote these scriptures live? If somebody had written these scriptures, were scriptures non existent before them? As the people at that time were ignorant of the Lord's commands, they could not have ascertained the rightful path and the sinful path. If they had performed sinful actions, what fault can be found in them? If those people had been punished for their actions, it is not justice. It is proper to award punishment only after the laws have been laid down. Is it proper to punish before the law is written? Our Religion alone differs from the others in this respect. We hold the view, that on the day God created the Universe, he also taught us the Pathway to Salvation.

सह यज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा···

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(Having created the mankind along with the sacrifices) Thus describes the Gita.

ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे। छन्दाँसि जज्ञिरे तस्मात्। यजुस्तस्मादजायत।

(Rig and Sama Veda came forth. From that (Supreme being), different Veda mantras also came out. From that (Supreme being). Yajur Veda came out too...)

From these it is clear that the rules regarding our conduct in life had been framed in the beginning itself.

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि॥

(You ought to know your duty from the scriptures and perform your duty in accordance with the Scriptural injunctions).

Thus it is clear that we should ascertain the injunctions of the Sastras (Scriptures) and should conduct ourselves as per the rules of the Sastras.

The reason for straying to the Sinful path

There are certain matters which are dangerous to our life. If we conduct our life without knowing them, death is certain. If we resort to a competent physician and if we seek the cure for our disease from him, we can live a long life. Instead, if we ourselves consume poison. It is like destroying our own life ourselves. We should not resort to the above course.

Just as diseases cause damage to the gross body or Sthula Sarira lust, anger and the like cause damage to the subtle body or Sookshma Sarira. That is why it has been mentioned about them as follows :—

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शब्दादिभिः पञ्चभिरेव पञ्च पञ्चत्वमापुः स्वगुणेन बद्धाः।
कुरङ्ग-मातङ्ग-पतङ्ग-मीन-भृङ्गा नरः पञ्चाभिरञ्चितः किम् ॥

(The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish and honey-bee were led to their destruction by their attachment to the sense of sound, touch, form, taste and smell respectively. What is the fate of the man who has attachments to all these five).

Thus it is clear that if we allow our senses to indulge in sense enjoyments destruction will result. If enjoyment has to be there, it should not be in violation of scriptural injunctions.

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ

(O Great one among Bharathas! In all beings, I am the enjoyment not opposed to Dharma).

Anger results in injury. This can lead to great sin.

The nature of man is such that he keeps on forgetting what he has done. That is why he forgets the suffering he has undergone and continues to indulge in sinful activities. Due to lust, anger and greed he violates the scriptural injunctions and is led to the sinful path.

दीर्घेण कालेन अनुष्टातृणां कामोद्भवाद् हीयमानविवेक विज्ञानहेतुकेन अधर्मेण अभिभूयमाने धर्मे प्रवर्धमाने च अधर्मे जगतः स्थितिं परिपिपालयिषुः स आदिकर्ता नारायणाख्यो विष्णुः भौमस्य ब्रह्मणो ब्राह्मणत्वस्य रक्षणार्थं देयक्यां वसुदेवांशेन कृष्णः किल संबभूव

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(After a long time, as lust, anger and the like arose in the minds of people doing Anushtana (spiritual practices), as discrimination vaned and due to this, Adharma (wrongful conduct) increased and Dharma (righteous conduct) decreased, the Prime-Creator Vishnu, who has the name Narayana, desiring the welfare of all creation, to protect spirituality, and further, the Brahmanattva of the wordly Brahma, manifested with His Glory as Lord Krishna, through Devaki and Vasudeva).

Whenever there is dwindling of righteousness (Dharma) taught by the Lord, the Lord manifests Himself as an Avatara like Sri Rama and brings about upliftment of the people. To lead His devotees on the right path, Lord Krishna performed His Anushtana (spiritual practices) properly even though He stood to gain nothing by them.

For Ishwara, there is nothing to be obtained by actions.

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥
यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥
उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः .... लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ।

(I have nothing whatsoever to achieve in the three worlds, O son of Pritha, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained. Yet I engage in action. For if

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I do not ever engage in action, unwearied, men would in all matters follow My path, O son of Pritha!. These worlds would be ruined if I do not perform action. would become the cause of confusion and destroy these creatures).

(It has been said that whatsoever a Great man does, that alone the other people do). In the Veda also, it is said :

सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् ।

(There should be no carelessness in the matter of Truth)

Lord Ramachandra has shown in His Avatara that we should be bound to Truth. If we want to know the special qualities of Sri Rama, we should refer to the first sarga of Ayodhya Kanda of Ramayana. In the Ramayana we can find Rama's devotion to His parents, His affection towards His brother and His good attitude towards Sita. Also we can find His renunciation of Sita for the sake of the people. Thus the Lord shows His Greatness even in His mortal Avatara.

It has been said about those people who give place to lust, anger and the like :-

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणः मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥

(Those people who have not realised God, endowed with unfruitful desires, vain deeds, wasteful knowledge, lack of the discrimination, the delusion, of the Asuras and Rakshasas.....).

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Worship of Ishwara

We all desire to live long. But if asked whether such a desire is fulfilled for all, it will be found from the experience of all that it is not so. The Lord also has said:

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जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

(For the born, death is certain; for the dead, birth is certain too. Hence in the matter that cannot be changed, you should not worry).

We have been born now. Therefore if there is to be a rebirth, there should be a death. The exit of Prana from the body is what is death. In the Veda, regarding death, it has been said - " (Death) is the departure of the subtle body from the physical one". However we want the Prana to remain (in our body). To whom will such an Utkramana (departure) not occur? In the Veda it has been said :

न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति अत्रैव समवलीयन्ते

(His pranas do not leave the body; here itself do they merge).

In the case of a Jnani the subtle body does not go to another departing from the physical one. The five Mahabhutas (Great Elements) viz- the Sky, Wind, Fire, Water and Earth, which are responsible for the Sarira (body) reach their respective basic causes. The Veda says that there is no death for a Jnani.

तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति

(Only if (one) knows Him does (one) go beyond death).
So has it been said in the Veda-

'To whom there is no death, for him rebirth too cannot be".

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पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं
पुनरपि जननी जठरे शयनम् ।

"Being born again; dying once more; being in the mother's womb once again"—statements like these will not befit a Jnani. Since there is desire in everybody for freedom from death, all should attain Jnana. If Jnana is to be obtained we should get to the required means too. In the Veda it has been said :

आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः

(O Dear ! The Atma must be seen; it should be heard about, cogitated upon and concentrated upon with one-pointed mind).

It has been said in the Veda that through Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana etc., the Atma should be perceived. Among the external qualities, Viveka, Vairagya, the wealth comprising of the six qualities beginning from Sama, Mumukshuttva etc. are very essential. If these qualities are not present, Sravana etc. may not yield the (desired) result. If a Yaga is to be performed, the Upanayana of the performer should have been over. (To perform a Yaga, the performer should have had the sacred thread). In performing a Yaga, many difficulties are met with. However, it is not that much painful to get the means of Jnana.

सकलभवनिवृत्तं चित्तमेतन्न यस्मात्
श्रवणमननकर्मानुष्ठितिस्स्यान्न तस्मात् ।
विषयकृतविषादो नापि सोढुं प्रशक्यः
हरिपदभजनं तन्निवृत्त्यै प्रकुर्मः ॥

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(Since this mind has not been freed from all wordly objects there is neither hearing about the Atma, contemplation thereupon, nor the performance of actions. It is also unable to withstand the worries caused by the objects. In order to get freedom from this, we do service at the Feet of the Lord).

So has it been said regarding the competent person.

The Nature of Devotion

By nature, we have attachment to one object at least. It has been said :

बालस्तावत्क्रीडासक्तः
तरुणस्तावत्तरुणीसक्तः ।
वृद्धस्तावच्चिन्तासक्तः
परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥

(A child is attached to games; a youth is attached to a woman; the aged one is attached to worries; but nobody is attached to the Supreme).

From this it is clear that at all times, we have desire in some matter or the other. It is difficult to go beyond such a desire. If we orient whatever attachment we have towards the Lord, we will derive all types of benefits. It is just a special Vritti of the mind that is Preeti (Love) For this an object is required. If the object is not present at all, there can be no love. The love towards children is called ' Vatsalya ', that towards wife and the such has the name 'Rathi' and the love towards Holy (revered) objects is termed 'Bhakti'. Narada in His Bhakti Sutras has said regarding Bhakti as follows :

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सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा

(Bhakti is of the nature of the greatest affection towards God).

Here 'Parama Prema' implies—'this person cannot exist without God'. That is, towards Ishwara, if there is no love even for a moment, he is not a real devotee at all. This indeed is the Supreme devotion. He is God who indeed is the basis of such a devotion. For such a one, there is no old-age or death.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म

(Tne Supreme Being is without change, of the nature of knowledge, and transcends limits).

Such is the character (Guna) of Ishwara. How is one to have devotion in the Supreme devoid of Gunas? The Gunas remain as causes of affection. How to have the affection where there are no Gunas at all? To this, Ishwara has said :

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ।।

(Though Unborn, Imperishable and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself by My Maya, controlling My Nature (Prakrithi).)

The Veda also has said :

अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते

The Unborn manifests multifariously).

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His incarnations are the God's 'Leelas'. What is the reason for the Lord to incarnate?

It has been said :

परोपकृतिकैवल्ये तोलयित्वा जनार्दनः ।
गुर्वीमुपकृतिं मत्वाऽवतारान्दशाग्रहीत् ॥

(Weighing the character of helping others against Moksha and having come to the conclusion that doing service to the others has more weight, (He) took ten incarnations).

परोपकृतिशून्यस्य धिङ्मनुष्यस्य जीवितम्

(The life of one who does not help others is a waste).

That is, the life of the person who is devoid of the quality of helping others is a sheer waste. Even the life of an animal is much better than that of a person who does not help, since at least its skin is useful after its death.

Ishwara is kindness personified. An illustration for this we can find in Mahabharata. Lord Krishna was in His palace. At the same time, as per Duryodhana's command, Duschadana brought Draupadi who was having great devotion to the Lord and started disrobing her in order to put her to shame. Then, Draupadi prayed to Krishna thus :

हा कृष्ण द्वारकावास क्वासि यादवनन्दन ।
इमामवस्थां संप्राप्तामनाथां किमुपेक्षसे ॥

(O! Krishna! the Resident of Dwaraka! One who gives happiness to the Yadavas! where are You? Why are You

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ignoring me, who has attained this state with nobody to save me?).

The Lord's heart had melted. He did not see the conveniences for the journey. He did not inform anybody. Immediately He went to Draupadi.

ऋणमेतत्प्रवृद्धं मे हृदयान्नापसर्पति ।
यद्गोविन्देति चुक्रोश कृष्णा मां दूरवासिनम् ॥

(Since Draupadi called Me who was very far and cried out 'Govinda'! this huge debt will not leave My mind). Thus says the Lord. The Lord sanctified the court and saved her honour.

As regards the qualities of God, it has been said in the Bhagavatha :

आत्मारामाश्च मुनयो निर्ग्रन्था अप्युरुक्रमे ।
कुर्वन्त्यहेतुकीं भक्तिमित्थंभूतगुणो हरिः ॥

(Even the sages who find the Bliss in the Atma Itself and who are devoid of bondages are devoted to God without any motive. This indeed is the greatness of the qualities of God).

योगक्षेमधुरन्धरस्य सकलश्रेयःप्रदोद्योगिनो
दृष्टादृष्टमतोपदेशकृतिनो बाह्यान्तरव्यापिनः ।
सर्वज्ञस्य दयाकरस्य भवतः किं वेदितव्यं मया
शंभो त्वं परमान्तरङ्ग इति मे चित्ते स्मराम्यन्वहम् ॥

(What am I to make known to You, Who endows the devotees with what is lacking in them, Who preserves

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what is present (in them), Who bestows all that is good to the Yogins, Who advises about the known and the unknown schools of thought, Who is within and withoutr Who is All-Knowing and merciful?. O Shambhu! You are my innermost Self. Thus do I always think in my mind).

This too is a prayer. The Lord's nature is indeed to be such as above. Only that deep an affection had in God is the important 'devotion'. Another name for this is 'Sadhya Bhakthi'. There are nine instrumental or causative stages for this. We call these also as devotion in one sense. Here, the name devotion is given to the Sadhanas (means) too.

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥
इति पुंसार्पिता विष्णौ भक्तिश्चेन्नवलक्षणा ।
क्रियते भगवत्यद्धा तन्मन्येऽधीतमुत्तमम् ॥

(Hearing about the Greatness of the Lord, praising Him' thinking of Him. serving His Feet, worshipping Him. paying obeisance to Him, being His servant, befriending Him and dedicating oneself to Him — if a man has in God such a devotion having nine forms, that I consider as the best education).

Listening to exposition of the works such as the Bhagavatha which describe the greatness of the Lord is called 'Sravana'. Such a hearing will increase the affection towards God.

On the other hand, we now waste the time in other worthless matters. By killing time tike this we are

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not going to attain any good in this world; nor are we going to attain good in the next. If we listen to the works such as the Bhagavata, not only does devotion develop, but we can also know how we should live in the world and also the state of the world. To attain Sreyas (the higher good), a number of means has been mentioned in the scriptures. In this Kali Yuga, it is difficult for all to follow these Sadhanas (means). Chanting the name of the Lord is indeed the easy way.

ध्यायन् कृते यजन्यज्ञैस्त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽर्चयन् ।
यदाप्नोति तदाप्नोति कलौ संकीर्त्य केवलम् ॥

(That which man would attain by Dhyana (meditation) in the Krita Yuga, by performing Yagas in the Treta Yuga, by Puja in the Dwapara Yuga—all that he attains by mere praise of Him in the Kali Yuga).

As the Yugas lapsed, the ability kept on decreasing and hence the means also became progressively easier However, what has to be achieved has not changed. We should never give it up. Performing the Mahamantra Japa also comes under the group of Kirtana(praising Him).

जप्येनैव तु संसिद्ध्येत् कलौ नास्त्यत्र संशयः ।
कुर्यादन्यन्न वा कुर्यान्मैत्रो ब्राह्मण उच्यते ॥

(There is no doubt that one attains the Siddhi in the Kali Yuga just by doing Japa of God's name; though one may do other things or may not do (them), one is said to be related to the Supreme).

कलेर्दोषनिधे राजन्नस्ति ह्येको महान्गुणः ।
कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तसङ्गः परं व्रजेत् ॥

(Oh King ! There is a great merit in the Kali Yuga, the

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store-house of wrongs. One gets freed from attachment and reaches the Supreme merely by praising God).

From this it is clear that if we keep on chanting the names of the Lord, we will be rid of all blemishes. We should never leave the duties ordained for us on account of any reason. If we do so, our Japa will not bear fruit. Such an abstention is termed " Naamaaparaadha ".

सन्निन्दाऽसति नामवैभवकथा श्रीशेशयोर्भेदधीः
अश्रद्धा श्रुतिशास्त्रदेशिकगिरां नाम्न्यर्थवादभ्रमः ।
नामास्तीति निषिद्धवृत्तिविहितत्यागौ च धर्मान्तरैः
साम्यं नामनि शङ्करस्य च हरेः नामापराधा दश ॥

(Finding fault with good people, preaching the greatness of the God's name to the wicked, thinking that Shiva and Vishnu are different, losing faith in the Veda, losing faith in the Sastras, losing faith in the words of the Guru, having the delusion that God's names have been praised though they may be impotent, indulging in forbidden activities with the false hope that the Naama is there (to guard), not carrying out the ordained duties and equating (the greatness of) Naama with (that of)the other Dharmas—these are the ten types of Naamaaparaadha).

तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरपि सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानदेन कीर्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥

(Humbler than the grass, more patient than the tree and unegoistic even if much respected—one with such qualities should always praise Ishwara).

In the Yoga Sutra it has been said :—

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तज्जपस्तदर्थभावना

(Contemplating on the Japa and its meaning).

Lord Krishna also has said-

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

(To Those people who worship Me from all sides without any difference who are always humble, I provide what is lacking(in them) and preserve what is present with them).

बर्हापीडं नटवरवपुः कर्णयोर्कर्णिकारं
बिभ्रद्वासः कनककपिशं वैजयन्तीं च मालाम् ।
रन्ध्रान्वेणोरधरसुधया पूरयन्गोपवृन्दैः
वृन्दारण्यं स्वपदरमणं प्राविशत् गीतकीर्तिः ॥

(He Who is donning the peacock feather, Who has the built of an exquisite dancer, Who wears ear-rings, Who sports a golden costume, Who dons the 'Vaijayanthi' garland, Who fills up the ears of Gopis by the nectar-like sound of His flute— the fame of the song of such a One entered Vrindavana).

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Thus one should contemplate on Ishwara.

The next item spoken of is Padasevana-that is, serving at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Bathing in the rivers such as the Ganges, which are like the waters flowing from the Feet of God also comes under this type of devotion.

विहर पितृवने वा विश्वपारे पुरे वा
रजतगिरितटे वा रत्नसानुस्थले वा ।
दिशभवदुपकण्ठं देहि मे भृत्यभावं
परमशिव तव श्रीपादुकावाहकानाम् ॥

(O Paramashiva! You may roam about in the crematorium or in a place beyond the world or in a city in Kailasa or on the peaks of the jewel (mountain). But please give me the attitude of a loving servant near You).

Ishwara's form should be worshipped as mentioned in the scriptures. For guidance towards this, Mrutyunjaya Manasa Puja Stotra, Devi Manasa Puja Stotra etc have been composed. What is to be done if there is no Vigraha or the capacity to do the Puja? What our Acharyal had said regarding this is that we can go to the temple and perform Archanas

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

(Leaf, flower, fruit, water-whoever offer Me these with devotion, that do I accept).

So has said the Lord Puja should not be performed to those Vigrahas to which Prana Pratishta (concercration) has not been done.

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अकृतायां प्रतिष्ठायां प्राणानां प्रतिमासु च ।
यथा पूर्वं तथा भावः स्वर्णादीनां न विष्णुता ।

(The Vigraha to which Prana Pratistha has not been performed will remain just as before. In Gold etc, there is no Godhood).

Just as attachement of the form 'my picture' arises on seeing our picture, Saannidhyam (a sense of Divinity) accrues in the Vighrahas to which Prana Pratishta has been performed. Is such a Puja based on form necessary for Ishwara who exists everywhere?. Yes, it is necessary indeed. Abundant milk is present in the cow's body. That alone is not sufficient as a medicine for it. Some times it may so happen that medicine should be mixed with ghee before giving it to the cow. Similiar is the case here also. Prostration is a part of the Puja. This is worshipping Him by contemplating mentally that Ishwara is present everywhere. This is what has been described as 'Vandana' in the devotional literature. While praising the Lord, Arjuna has said :-

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।

(Prostration to You from the front and from the rear. Oh! One who is everything! prostrations to You from all sides).

The next means described is 'Dasya' (servant-attitude).

श्रुतिस्मृती ममैवज्ञा

(The Veda and the Smruti are my Commands).

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So has said the Lord. Hence what we should do is treat the Sruti and the Smriti as His commands, follow them with faith and dedicate everything to the Lord as per the words of the Lord running as follows :—

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

(O Son of Kunti! whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice in the Yaga, whatever you donate, whatever penance you perform—dedicate all those to Me).

Next has been described 'Sakhya' (friendly attitude)

If we keep on having such devotion, attachment towards Ishwara will become stronger. Such is a friend in whom we have no fear at all. He too will be of the opinion that I too should be happy. Having such an attitude towards Ishwara is 'Sakhya'. Lastly, we have 'Atma-Nivedana. Atma Nivedana is nothing but considering that Ishwara is not different from us. After a river has merged with the ocean, there will be no separate identity for the river apart from that of the ocean. That which was the river becomes the ocean and the ocean becomes the river. One who attains such a state will remain in Ishwara Himself.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

(O Bharatha! surrender to Him with all thoughts. By His grace you will attain that imperishable state of Supreme Peace).

Thus has declared Lord Krishna in the Gita.

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तच्चिन्तनं तत्कथनमन्योन्यं तत्प्रबोधनम् ।
एतदेकपरत्वं च ब्रह्माभ्यासं विदुर्बुधाः ॥

(Always thinking about Him, talking about Him, clarifying each other about Him, concentrating only on Him—these the wise have known as 'Brahmabhyasa').

Thus are the words of the great ones also. We should dedicate everything to Him and be without any worry. If we do so, the Lord Himself will do everything for us such as providing what we lack and preserving what we have. Finally, He will give the Atma-Jnana (Self-Realisation) too. That is the Eternal Life that we desire; that indeed is the never-ending state. Reaching God alone is the best benefit.

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Bhakthi Yoga

अमितमुदमृतं मुहुर्दुहन्तीं
विमलभवत्पदगोष्ठमावसन्तीम् ।
सदय पशुपते सुपुण्यपाकां
मम परिपालय भक्तिधेनुमेकाम् ॥

(O Lord of all creations ! O Compassionate One ! protect this only cow called my devotion which is the effect of Punya (good deeds) and which resides in the cow shed called Your Lotus Feet and which again and again bestows abundant—nectar-like bliss).

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Thus Sri Sankara Bhagavatpadal has said in Sivanandalahari. We must have devotion towards God who is of the nature of Bliss. Adi Sankara Bhagavadpadal prays in Sivanandalahari that His Grace always be with us. We can infer from Bhagavadpal's prayer that Bhakti is not only a means for attaining the Higher Good but also a superior means. Let us analyse a bit about Bhakthi which is the means for attaining the Supreme.

It has been said :

सुखाय यद्यत्क्रियतेऽपि वाऽनिशं
सुखं न किञ्चिद्बहुदुःखमेव तत्

(Whatever one ceaselesly does for happiness yields not joy but extreme sorrow only).

We atempt in various ways to attain happiness. It is not wrong to say that we experience sorrow at the end. So, we should have a firm conclusion in our mind that our materilalistic exertions will not give happiness. Our Sastras, the lives of Sages and the Epics clearly point to the existence of limitless happiness. Since we have not attained limitless happiness till now, we must understand that there is some fault in our attempts Everybody desires results. But as our attempt is not proper, we do not get the desired result. ' Feeling sad for not getting a mango tree after planting a banyan seed ' is just the way we are experiencing mere sadness at the end.

As regards materialistic benefits, if we analyse the materialistic exertions through the processes of concordance and discordance we have to accept the existence of Shabdha Pramana which is of the nature of a well-wisher's advice.

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The Supreme Veda Which came forth from the lips of Ishwara, our Supreme Well-Wisher, and Which bestows all types of benefits on us, says as follows :

तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति

(Knowing Him, one goes beyond death).

From these statements it is clear that only by knowing the Supreme Being, liberation from sorrows and the attainment of higher bliss are possible.

For attaining the Supreme, it has been said in the Sastras :

आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यसितव्यः

(O Dear ! The Atma has to be seen, heard of, thought of and meditated upon with one-pointed concentration).

So it has been seen that Sravana (hearing), Manana (cogitation) and Nididhayasana (one-pointed concentration) have been ordained for attaining the Supreme. From these statements we can clearly understand that through Atma Jnana which results from Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana, Atma can be seen and then, Moksha (Liberation) can be attained. The Mind must be pure for the performance of Sravana, Manana etc and the same idea is clearly brought about by the following quotation :

कषाये कर्मभिः पक्वे ततो ज्ञानं प्रवर्तते

(Jnana or the Means for Jnana results after the removal of impurities from the mind through Karma (actions)).

This is true only in the case of exceptionally competent aspirants with pure mind. We can find the following statement in Sankara Vijaya.

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परिपक्वमतेः सकृत् श्रुतं जनयेदात्मधियं श्रुतेर्वचः ।
परिमन्दमतेः शनैः शनैर्गुरुपादाब्जनिषेवणादिना ॥

(To the one of ripe intellect, hearing of the words of the Vedas even but once generates Atma Jnana. To the one of dull intellect, (the Atma Jnana dawns) slowly and gradually through service at the Lotus Feet of the Guru and such other (actions).

From this it is clear that in the case of exceptionally competent aspirants Atma-Jnana immediately dawns on hearing the Mahavakyas from their Guru. Sravana, Manana and Nididhayasana are necessary in the case of aspirants of medium calibre. Upasana and the like are necessary in the case of aspirants of low calibre. Bhakthi occupies a premier position among these Upasanas.

हरिचरणभक्तियोगान्मनः स्ववेगं जहाति शनैः

(Mind gradually leaves its wandering nature owing to the devotion cultivated towards the Foot of Ishwara).

It is said that Bhakthi purifies the mind. Let us now analyse the nature of Bhakthi; ie,the mental attitude towards a person of reverence is called Bhakthi. The faith in such a person is Bhakthi. It is such a faith that we call in worldly matters as Pithru Bhakthi and Mathru Bhakthi (reverence towards father and mother respectively). The effort made for cultivating this faith is also called Bhakthi. Due to the same reason, hearing of Lord's sport and thinking about Him also are called Bhakthi. In the case of superior devotees these qualities continue to exist even after the inducement of faith. We term Sadhana (Practice) and also result of Sadhana as Bhakthi Bhakthi is Prema (Highest love). This can also be called as Anuraga (faith).

सा पराऽनुरक्तिरीश्वरे

(Bhakti is excessive attachment towards God.)

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Prahlada has said :

या प्रीतिरविवेकानां विषयेष्वनपायिनी।
त्वामनुस्मरतः सा मे हृदयान्माऽपसर्पतु ।।

(That endless affection which undiscriminating ones have towards sense objects—may that kind of affection never leave me who thinks of You).

The attachment in the case of actions which give happiness is termed as ' Raga '. It is has been said :

सुखानुशायी रागः

(Having attachment in happiness is called Raga).

The attachment in God who is of the nature of the Highest Bliss and Who bestows happiness on devotees is alone true' Raga '. The attitude which is the effect of thinking about the greatness of God is Raga. So, in relation to God, the term Anuraga is also correct. That is also Prema as well as Bhakthi in God It has been said— ' When I was alive I enjoyed happiness because of God. After my death I will depart from this body. Even after I leave this body let the five great elements which produce this body reach God. Let the Prithivi (Earth) aspect reach God's abode and the Tejas (Fire) aspect merge in the mirror used by God.....'.

Bhakthi has been classified as Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. Bhakthi cultivated for harming others is Tamasic Bhakthi. Even though it gives happiness for that moment, we should not desire that as it does not give the Supreme state. Bhakthi cultivated by Ravana and the demons come under this category. Bhakthi cultivated for attainning happiness in this world and Swarga is called Rajasic

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Bhakthi. The Highest Good (liberation) is not attained by this; only wordly happiness is attainable. This type of Bhakthi is not necessary for those who desire only Moksha. The third type of Bhakthi is Sattvika Bhakthi. This is the best Sadhana for attaining the Supreme state. Performance of actions which are ordained for one's Ashrama (stage of life) without attachment and with an attitude of dedication to God is Sattvika Bhakthi. It is said in the Bhagavatha that Bhakthi is the performance of ordained actions for gaining God's grace. Generally ordinray people understand only the worship of ishwara's Form or Bhajan as Bhakthi, whereas true Bhakthi is performing actions ordained for one in the proper way. In Brhannaradiya it has been said :

वेदोदितानि कर्माणि कुर्यादीश्वरतुष्टये ।
यथाऽऽश्रमं त्यक्तकामः प्राप्नोति परमं पदम् ॥

(One who, after renouncing desire, performs actions that are ordained in the Vedas for one's Ashrama, for pleasing Ishwara, attains exalted state).

Cultivation of this Bhakthi comes under the group " Dasya " (Servant-attitude). It is wrong to neglect the performance of actions ordained for one's Ashrama for the reason that Nama Japa (Name repetition) is being done. The reason is that such actions are ordained by Ishwara Himself. If we do not perform the ordained actions properly then it is equivalent to disobeying Ishwara's instructions. If we behave like that we will be punished by Ishwara. An example can be cited for this. A servant, even though has special affection for his king, will be subjected to the wrath of the king if he does not carry out the king's instructions. It has to be understood that similar is the case with Ishwara also.

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Proper aspirant for Bhakthi

All are suitable for the cultivation of Bhakthi. Other than Sanyasis specially suited to the path of Jnana, all others who belong to other Ashramas should attain Sreyas through Bhakthi. Jnana which gives Moksha dawns due to Sravana, Manana and Nididhayasana. The six qualities Sama etc. are necessary for proper performance of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. These qualities are not perfect in all. So, though they make efforts there are some people who are in a stage in which they cannot be classified as truly devoted or even as practising Sravana etc. These people also desire Moksha. As the mind has not become pure they are not suitable for Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. This type of people should specially resort to Bhakthi.

He has said :

भाग्योदयेन मत्कथादौ जातश्रद्धश्च यः पुमान् ।
न निर्विण्णो न चासक्तो भक्तियोगोऽस्य सिद्धिदः ॥

(Bhakthi Yoga bestows highest good to the person who, due to his fortune, has faith in My stories etc, and who is neither despondent nor highly attached).

It is said about the aspiarnt :

सकलभवनिवृत्तं चित्तमेतन्न यस्मात्
श्रवणमननकर्मानुष्ठितिस्स्यान्न तस्मात् ।
विषयकृतविषादो नापि सोढुं प्रशक्यः
हरिपदभजनं तन्निवृत्त्यै प्रकुर्मः ॥

(Hearing about the Atma, cogitation and performance of Karmas are not there as the mind has not become free

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from the attractions of all the worldly objects. One is also not able to bear the worries created by worldly objects. To obtain freedom from this, we serve at the Feet of Ishwara).

Bhakthi-the cause of Moksha

If this type of Bhakthi is cuitlvated always the mind will become pure. This will become similar to Saguna Upasana (Form Worship). Impurities of the mind will vanish due to Saguna Upasana. Devotees with pure mind attain Jnana.

It is said in the Bhagavat Gita :

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

(Those who are always devoted to and serve Me with affection—to them I give the state with which they reach Me).

The Veda also says as follows :

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूँ स्वाम् ॥

(The Atma cannot be known through excessive learning intellect or hearing. The Atma is attained by Him who seeks the Atma alone. His Atma manifests its true nature to Him).

Jnana will never dawn without Ishwara's Grace.

It is said :

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विज्ञानञ्च त्वायि शिव ऋते त्वत्प्रसादान्न लभ्यम्

(O Siva! without Your Grace, Jnana cannot be attained).

Nirguna Upasana (Formless worship) gives knowledge about the attributeless Brahman. it is said :

...सगुणब्रह्मशीलनात्
तदेवाविर्भवेत्साक्षादपेतोपाधिकल्पनम् ॥

(That limitless entity will become clear through Saguna Upasana.....).

It is everybody's duty to cultivate Bhakthi as it gives mental purity, competence for performing Nidhayasana etc and also bestows Atma Jnana.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु

(Think of Me always; be My Bhaktha.....).

Such statements clearly indicate the importance of Bhakthi. I pray to Ishwara that the devotion in everybody's heart becomes greater.

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Soul Is Distinct From The Body

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says :

आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति

(It is for the Atma alone that everything becomes dear)

One has love for one's son or wife, not for their sake but for one's sake alone. It is only because of love for oneself that one loves others. The same idea has been enunciated by Bhagavathpadal :

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यस्माद्यावत्प्रियं स्यादिह हि विषयतस्तावदस्मिन्प्रियत्वं
यावद्दुःखं च यस्माद्भवति खलु ततस्तावदेवाप्रियत्वम् ।
नैकस्मिन्सर्वकालेऽस्त्युभयमपि बदाऽप्यप्रियोऽपि प्रियः स्यात्
प्रेयानप्यप्रियो वा सततमपि ततः प्रेय आत्माख्यवस्तु ॥

(An object will be dear to one as long as one derives pleasure from it; and it will be disliked by one as long as it gives pain. The same object cannot always be liked or disliked. Sometimes, that which is not dear may become dear. Moreover, that which was dear can become unpleasant. Hence the Atma is always held in great affection).

Ordinarily, it may seem that one has affection in others for other's sake only. Many think like this—' I do this for him alone. They do this for me alone '. Hence it is natural for a doubt to arise that objects are dear to one for the sake of the objects only. Great men sacrifice for others. Sometimes, we are also ready to sacrifice for others. An object may appear good to one but not so, far another. We derive pleasure from worldly objects while Great men are not interested in material pleasures. Careful analysis will show that Great men, having renounced material pleasures find happiness by being immersed in the Self. Even though it may seem to us that material objects can give happiness, Great men are of the firm belief that these objects can only produce sorrow. Great men cannot bear to look at the sufferings in this world and they exert themselves only for the welfare of the world. Hence, one makes efforts to gain that which will give one happiness. Though one may love one's wife and son very much, one places even greater affection in oneself. That is why Vidyaranya clarifies—" When the

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child is crying pricked by the thorny moustache, its father repeatedly kisses it". We discuss about the material objects and try to know their true nature. But no one tries to know one's true nature. Such an effort is rare. One must indeed be fortunate to know one's true nature.

श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः
शृण्वन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विद्युः।
आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धाऽऽ-
श्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः॥

(The Atma is not available to many even to hear about and many do not understand even when they hear about It. Its expounder is wonderful and the receiver of the teaching is wonderful. Wonderful is he who knows about It on being instructed by an adept).

Thus the Vedas clarify by saying that it is difficult to know about the Atma.

The Charvaka View

Even the ignorant think that the Self which is the repository of highest affection is nothing other than the body. One does not perceive Atma different from the body. Thoughts like ' I am fat,' ' I am lean ' etc occur to laymen as also to scholars. In such cases, the word 'I' is used to refer to the body. If the Atma and body were different, thoughts like ' I am fair ', etc should not have occured. Vedantins say that such thoughts are only illusions just as we talk about a Sphatika (crystal) being red in colour. But if such a thought were to be an illusion, that illusion should vanish some day or the other. But to laymen as well as to scholars, thoughts like 'I am a Brahmin', 'I am fair', etc do not come to an end. There-

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fore, we should conclude that the aforesaid thoughts are real. Hence, by Atma we mean only the body. Consciousness is found only where body is present. The body is a combination of the five elements. If this is so, doubts such as "Why is consciousness not seen in stone, mud etc?" may arise. Just as the intoxicating capacity is not seen in jaggery which is the ingredient of wine, so also life is not seen in stone, mud etc even if they are the combinations of the five elements. But the consciousness is seen only where the five elements merge to form the body. Hence, consciousness arises only where a special combination of elements occurs. Since such a special combination is not present in stone, mud etc, no life can be perceived in them. Happiness and sorrow can be present only where consciousness is present. Consequently, happiness and sorrow are not present in stone, mud etc. where there is absence of consciousness. Therefore, the objection as to why there is no life in stone, mud, etc and why there is no happiness and sorrow in them is not proper. Only that can be taken as the Pramana (authority) from which knowledge of objects can be derived. Knowledge arises only through the eye, ear, nose, skin and tongue. Hence, we have to accept these as Pramanas. However, through these we are not able to perceive Atma different from the body.

मानाधीना मेयसिद्धिः

(Knowledge is based on the authority).

Based on this, it is not possible to accept the existence of a separate Atma. For those who believe that body alone is the Atma, death indeed is liberation. Hence they say :

भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः

(How can the burnt body return?)

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Happiness and sorrow do not arise after the disappearance of the body. Hence, happiness and sorrow are ony what we experience now. Such being the case, we have no reason to worry about the happiness and sorrow in the other world. We have to make efforts to experience happiness in this birth alone. Here, a question can be raised — " If everyone is aware of what you say, then why are you endeavouring to propagate your philosophy ? " Their answer is, "In reality wealth alone is the best among everything. We can attain all pleasures by attaining wealth. But there are some who, bearing the name of Astikas (theists) are desirous of deceiving others. They are not capable of experiencing sensual pleasures. Moreover, they are jealous of others because the latter live comfortably. Hence by saying, 'This act will lead to a bad end', they create an illusion among people and bring difficulties to them. Hence one should study our Sastras and by concluding, 'There is no higher world, nor the need for us to fear about that', one should enjoy the pleasures in this world. We give this advice out of compassion."

It is said of this philosophy that :

तस्माद् दृष्टपरित्यागाददृष्टे च प्रवर्तनम् ।
लोकस्य तद्विमूढत्वं चार्वाकाः प्रतिषेदिरे ॥

(The Charvakas pointed out the foolishness of people who abandoned what they knew and tried to attain what they knew not).

This is called ' Charvaka ' philosophy. It is difficult to say how many people accepted this philosophy in the past. But in the present days, it will not be wrong to say that this has spread everywhere. Even in foreign countries, many people regarding themselves as scholars talk about this philosophy based on some compositions.

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Darshanas

If the above philosophy were to be true, the six Astika Darshnas (Theistic views) responsible for leading one to Sreyas would be rendered unnecessary because every view is opposed to this philosophy. Two opposing ideas cannot at the same time remain true. Hence, if this Charvaka view were to become true, the six Darshanas would have to be untrue and not regarded as authorities. Naiyayika, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Jaimineeya and Vayyasika constitute the six Darshanas.

By the saying,

दर्शयति परमार्थत्वं इति दर्शनम्

(Darshana is that which shows us the way to the highest) it is clear that 'Darshna shows the highest Purushartha (Moksha)'. All these Darshanas uniformly accept that Atma exists, being different from the body, even though there may be differences in opinions in other matters.

Opposing views of Theism and Atheism

In the Charvaka philosophy, there is no such thing as Moksha. After the death of the body, ashes alone remain. Therefore, there is no one to experience heaven and hell. But the Srutis and Smritis say that there exists the Atma different from the body and that heaven and hell exist. In the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, utterances such as

ज्योतिष्टोमेन स्वर्गकामो यजेत

(May one who is desirous of attaining heaven perform the Jyotishtoma Yaga) show the way to attaining Preyas (worldly comforts).

अथ मर्त्यो अमृतो भवति

(The mortal becomes immortal).

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Such utterances belonging to the Jnana Kanda show the way to attaining Sreyas (highest good). If the aforesaid Charvaka view were to be true, all these views would cease to be authoritative.

Sruti (Veda) : The Karma Kanda and the Jnana Kanda together establish the existence of the Atma different from the body. The same point is clarified by the six Darshanas. In one place in the Katopanishad, which is one of the ten major Upanishads, the nature of the Atma is described in the form of a story. There, Nachiketas asks Yama :

येयं प्रेते विचिकित्सा मनुष्येऽ-
स्तीत्येके नायमस्तीति चैके ।
एतद्विद्यमानुशिष्टस्त्वयाऽहं
वराणामेष वरस्तृतीयः ॥

(This doubt arises after one's death. Some say that there exists the Atma apart from the body; some others say that It does not. I will learn this through Your teachings. Of all the boons, this is the third boon I am desirous of).

To this, Yama replies, 'Even the Devas do not know this properly', and then explains by saying: —

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चि-
न्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

(This Atma is not born, nor does it die. It does not come into being from anything. Nothing also comes out of it.

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Being Unborn, Eternal Indestructible and Ancient, it does not die when the body dies).

The same idea is taught by the Lord to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita :

वसांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

(Just as a man casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others that are new, so does the Jiva cast off worn-out bodies and enter into others that are new).

The same point has been raised in the form of a doubt in the Brahma Sutras

एक आत्मनः शरीरे भावात्

(Some deny the existence of the Atma because its existence depends on the existence of the body).
and also has been answered :

व्यतिरेकस्तद्भावाभावित्वान्न तूपलब्धिवत्

(But that is not so. There exists distinction between the Atma and body. This is because, even if the body exists, there need not be consciousness. An example for this would be perception).

Here, by showing that Anvaya (concordance) and Vyatireka (discordance) cannot be applied to the Atma and the body they have taught that the Atma is different from the body.

अस्त्यात्मा नास्तित्वसाधनाभावात् ।

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(Atma exists, for there is no basis for showing that it does not exist).

देहादिव्यतिरिक्तोऽसौ वैचित्र्यात्

(It is different from the body etc because of the existence of the differences).

Hence, has it been established in the Sankhya Sutra, that 'Atma is different from the body.

Arguments for establishing the existence of Atma

Let us analyse the arguments posed to establish the Vedic utterance, 'Atma is different from the body'.

It is said:

कश्चिद्दुःखी स्वजन्मप्रभृति सुखयुतः चापरः कस्य हेतोः
कस्मादाद्या प्रवृत्तिस्तनुरपि च कुतः किं न वेत्ति प्रमीतः।
स्वाभाव्यं हेतुसाम्ये सममितिविदितं दीपबीजाङ्कुरादौ
वैषम्यं कर्मजन्यं यदि गदसि जनेः पूर्वमप्यात्मसिद्धिः॥

(One experiences troubles right from the birth; another remains in happiness. What is the reason for this? How does the first act occur? How does the body come into being? Why is there no knowledge after death? There is a rule that if the causes regarding the lamp, seed, seedling etc are the same, then their nature should also be the same. If it is said that the difference is due to Karma, it is clear that Atma must have existed earlier).

Even though human bodies are of the same kind, some experience sorrow, disease and the like right from birth. Some by experiencing wealth and good health remain happy. Why is it so? it has to be accepted that virtue and sin are the causes for this. If virtue and sin

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are respectively responsible for happiness and sorrow these experiences could not have existed right from birth; the cause and effect cannot come into being at the same instant. Hence, this virtue and sin must have been formed in the previous birth. By this method of 'Anvaya, and Vyatireka' we can know that the knowledge—'Whatever task we begin, our desire can be fulfilled through that action', is present. We see a small child drinking it. mother's milk. Why does it indulge in this action? It does so only if it knows that its desires will be fulfilled by that action. This should have been known to it either through others' word or direct perception. But in this birth, there is no chance for that child to have obtained this knowledge through these two means. If it did not have that knowledge, It would not have involved in that acton. If that knowledge had not been present, it would have had to be down always with a dry throat. But, because it had a Samskara (tendency) to drink its mother's milk, we have to conclude that it had a previous birth. The knowledge that had arisen in the previous birth is present now in the form of Samskaras. Being fortunate, the child remembers that tendency. Chariots, mansions and the like which are the effects (of action) are responsible for man's happiness and sorrow. Moreover, it should be accepted that they are under the control of a conscious entity. When it is said that other objects giving happiness and sorrow are under the control of a concious entity, it is not right to say that our body is not so. If, as the Charvaka says, consciousness arises due to the combination of elements, that consciousness must be present in each part of those elements. If we accept this, then the consciousness must be present in every parts of our body If the consciousness were to be present in all the parts then, it is highly unlike that the same thought occurs in

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all of them in that case, the destruction that will occur to a plantain tree if it is pulled in many directions by a lot of elephants will also occur to this body. The form of a pot also exists as long as the pot exists. Likewise, when a body exists, the conciousness being the Dharma of the body will have to exist because the body is present even after one dies. But that is not so. The Charvaka cannot give an appropriate reply to this. "Where the body is seen, only there the Chaitanyam is seen. Therefore the nature of the body is consciousness'—such conclusions should not be arrived at by Anvaya and Vyatireka. Light is necessary for objects such a pot to be visible. Wherever light is present, only there can these objects be visible. Therefore, can it be accepted that these objects are of the nature of light?

At this point, the Charvaka may say that happiness and sorrow are only natural. It can be said that they are the instinctive properties of the body. This cannot be right. Effects which result from similar causes should also be similar. A mango seed buried in the ground will give rise only to a mango tree but not to a coconut tree. Likewise, only mangoes and not coconuts can be obtained from a mango tree. Therefore if the cases are similar the effects all have to be similar. The causes for the formation of bodies being similar, their natures also have to be similar. This is because the cause is similar according to the aforesaid rule. Therefore the nature which is the effect should also be similar. Hence, happiness and sorrow also have to be similar for all. It cannot be accepted if it is said, 'Happiness and sorrow are natural'. This is because, if we accept this rule, nothing in this world will be governed by any rule. Therefore, we have to accept that Dharma, alone is the cause of happiness and sorrow. It cannot be said that Dharma and Adharma

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(good and bad deeds) are those that are committed now. If it is said so, a man who commits a sin cannot be experiencing happiness then. Manu has said :

अधर्मेणधते तावत्ततो तिद्राणि पश्यति ।
ततः सपत्नाञ्जयति समूलस्तु वितश्यति ॥

(By Adharma such as treachery, one apparently flourishes and then perceives prosperity by acquiring much possession. Then one overcomes foes. Finaly, one is destroyed).

Since one who performs good deeds also experiences sorrow, it cannot be said that he is reaping the fruits of actions done in this birth only. It has to be accepted that there must have been a previous birth. The cause for the happiness and sorrow experienced in that birth has to be the actions performed in the birth previous to that. If we accept this, then it is established that Samsara is beginningless and also that Atma is coming down to this world from time immemorial. At this stage, a question can arise. If as accepted by Astikas (Theists) the world was created by God, then why should it be accepted that the causes of the body or happiness and sorrow are the actions done in the births previous to that? It can be said, 'this inexplicable happiness and sorrow were created by Ishwara!' We may as well accept that Ishwara Himself being Omnipotent can be the cause of such inexplicable happenings. If that is accepted, it is tantamount to the absence of Godhood in Him. If one happens to be a good king in this world, then one gives reward or punishment according to actions without being partial. If this is not the case, Ishwara is partial and cruel as He has introduced happiness and sorrow without any reason at the time of creation. If that is so, then it will be that He will be devoid of Ishwara-hood It is because of this that Veda Vyasa has said :

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वैषम्यनैर्घृण्ये न सापेक्षत्वात् तथा हि दर्शयति

(It cannot be said that Ishwara is partial or cruel because He considered other aspects. That is how the Vedas show).

Therefore, it has to be accepted that Ishwara gives the fruits according to the action performed. Since the cause of these actions must be the action performed in the previous birth, we have to accept that Samsara is beginningless. Since these births occur to the Atma, it is established that Atma is also beginningless.

As it has been established that there exists the Atma which is external and different from the body, the knowledge like 'I am fair' is mere illusion, like the knowledge-' An iron piece burns '.

Final Reasoning

Those who recollect the previous birth do so by direct perception itself. The actions performed by man and the happiness or sorrow experienced are not for the body, but are related to some conscious entity. So do we find. If there were not a separate conscious entity, this would not be possible.

The Yoga Sutra says :

संस्कारसाक्षात्करणात् पूर्वजातिज्ञानम्

(Knowledge of previous birth arises from perception of Samskaras (tendencies)).

The Charvakas have to accept this theory but still they do not, because they accept only direct perception as the authority. However, what have been said so far are arguments. Arguments belong to Anumana (inference) but they (the Charvakas) do not accept this as authority. Therefore, let us decide when Anumana can be taken as an authority.

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Sun and Moon appear small to us. Jyotisha Sastras tell us that Sun and Moon appear small on account of their great distance from us while actually, they are very large. Which should we accept amongst these? A normal person will accept that which seems right to his intellect. If direct perception alone were to be the authority, then all that we know must always be directly perceived by us. If that is the case, how can we carry on other activities?

Hence it is said :

मानं प्रत्यक्षमेकं यदि कथय हि कथं भाषितं ते प्रमाणम्

(If direct perception alone were to be the authority for you, how can what you speak be an authority (because inference is necessary to understand speech)).

भवांस्तेन मिथ्याप्रलापी

(Therefore, you are a liar).

If it is accepted that direct perception alone is authority, it is futile to talk to others because their knowledge is not directly perceived by us. Hence, the arguments given by us have to be accepted as authority. So there is nothing wrong in giving arguments.

Conclusion

Therefore it has been established that Ishwara exists and Srutis and Smritis which have come from Him are alone the authorities. Since you (Charvakas) are incapable of controlling the senses, you are propogating this wrong theory that others may be like you and not oppose you. We pray to Acharyal that the truth about the Atma, which is essential for the Jnana and Karma Kandas should always rest in our hearts.

Finally, what we should say is this-

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सन्दिग्धेऽपि परे लोके कर्तव्यो धर्म एव हि ।
नास्ति चेन्नास्ति नो हानिरस्ति चेन्नास्तिको हतः ॥

(Even if the existence of the other world is doubted, Dharma alone should be performed. Even if that (other world) does not exist, there is no loss in performing Dharma. But if that (other world) exists, the Nastikas (atheists) will perish).

The Katopanishad says:

न सांपरायः प्रतिभाति बालं
प्रमाद्यन्तं वित्तमोहेन मूढम् ।
अयं लोको नास्ति पर इति मानी
पुनः पुनर्वशमापद्यते मे ॥

(The means for the attainment of the other world does not become revealed to the non-discriminating man who blunders, being deluded by the lure of wealth. One that constantly thinks that there is only this world and none hereafter comes under my (Yama's) sway again and again).

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Religious Education

That which is the cause for producing true knowledge of an object is thought of as Pramana.

प्रमाकरणं प्रमाणम्

(That which produces true knowledge is Pramana).

What the senses like eyes convey is Pramana as knowledge comes from them. Similarly, sound is also Pramana as it produces knowledge through ears.

आप्तवाक्यं शब्दः

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(That which is told by a well-wisher is called Sabdha).

Mere Sabdha (sound) will not become Pramana. The words of a person that are uttered to deceive somebody will never become Pramana. Due to this, the word of a well-wisher is said to be Pramana. He who conveys facts without twisting them is a well-wisher. If that which is conveyed through words conforms with worldly rules, then those words also become Pramana. Who is the well-wisher of everybody?.

न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः

(There is nobody whom I hate and there is nobody whom I like).

The person who satisfies the above condition is the well-wisher of everybody. Whatever has been told by a person who satisfies this will also become Pramana. Objects like stone etc do not have likes or dislikes as they are inert (We cannot call them as well-wishers). So, apart from what has been told previously, he must have knowledge about everything. Sush a person becomes the well-wisher of everybody in all matters. Only the Supreme Lord is such. The Vedas and Their parts (Siksha, Kalpam and the like), Smritis (Puranas, Itihasas etc) and Tantras which were written by the Sages with Ishwara's Grace with the Vedas as their basis are Pramana. Everything cannot be learnt through sense perception and inference alone. Nobody can learn everything with his knowledge alone. One becomes a scholar by hearing the experiences of one's ancestors and following them.

When this rule is there even in the case of this apparent world, sense perception and inference alone are not sufficient to convey that which is beyond sense organs.

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नाध्यापयिष्यन् निगमान् श्रमेणोपा-
ध्यायलोका यदि शिष्यवर्गान् ।
निर्वेदवादं किल निर्वितान-
मुर्वीतलं हन्त तदा भविष्यत् ॥

(If the Teachers do not teach their disciples with effort, the Vedic path will attain the status of non-existence).

Attaining the knowledge that is expounded by the Vedas should be the ambition of a man.

अपि मानुष्यकं लब्ध्वा भवन्ति ज्ञानिनो न ये ।
पशुतैव वरं तेषां प्रत्यवायाप्रवर्तनात् ।

(Animals are superior to those who have not attained Jnana even after getting human birth since they (animals) do not commit sins).

लौकिकं वैदिकं वापि तथाध्यात्मिकमेव च ।
आददीत यतो ज्ञानं तं पूर्वमभिवादयेत् ॥

(As He (Guru) imparts knowledge about the world, the Vedas and the Atma, He should be first worshipped).

Period for Education

गतेऽपि वयसि ग्राह्या विद्या सर्वात्मना बुधैः ।
यद्यपि स्यान्न फलदा सुलभा साऽन्यजन्मनि ॥

(Wise persons should try and acquire education even at an old age. Even if that education does not give benefit in this birth, it can be easily acquired in the next birth).

Even though education can be acquired at any age, from our worldly rules and from the rules of our Sastra, the important period for it is the period between Upa-

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nayana and marriage. Physical strength is necessary for acquiring education.

अष्टवर्षं ब्राह्मणमुपनयीत

(Upanayana must be performed at the age of eight for a Brahmana).

So, from these Vedic utterances it is clear that the period after Upanayana is the proper period for acquiring education. During the period of education Brahmacharya has to be observed and after that one may become a Grahastha. Otherwise, one can take the resolve to observe Brahmacharya throughout one's life and lead the life of a Naishtika Brahmachari.

In our very short span of life, even if golden castles (great achievements) are not attained, there is not much of a loss as they have been proved to be untrue (by knowledge).

Hence we need not lament over our inability to achieve great things but must try to do our best.

As has been said, each and every moment of our life is very precious.

A moment lost is lost for ever.

अजरामरवत्प्राज्ञो विद्यामर्थं च साधयेत् ।
गृहीत इव केशेषु मृत्युना धर्ममाचरेत् ॥

(A wise person should strive as if there is no old age or death for him while acquiring knowledge and wealth. But while performing Dharma he should think as if death is gripping his hair (and act with urgency)).

We should lead our lives like this.

Rules

Learning of mere words will not become education.

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विद्यया विनयावाप्तिः सा चेद्विनयाबहा ।
किं ब्रूमः किं प्रतिब्रूमो गरदायां स्वमातरि ॥

(Humility should come from education. If education does not impart humility, then what can we tell about that education? That education is similar to a mother who gives poison to her child).

Education is that due to which one attains happiness in this world and the next. Otherwise, it is just ignorance. During the period of education, importance must be given to purity and righteous conduct (Acharam).

Manu has said :

उपनीय गुरुः शिष्यं शिक्षयेच्छौचमादितः ।
आचारमग्निकार्यञ्च सन्ध्योपासनमेव च ॥

(The Guru, after performing Upanayana of his disciple, should teach him about purity, righteous conduct, Samidadhana and Sandhya Upasana).

The Veda says :

यन्मनुरवदत्तद्भेषजम्

(That which has been declared by Manu is like medicine) The purity as told by Manu is of two types : (i) External purity (ii) Internal purity.

मृज्जलाभ्यां बहिः शौचम्

(That which comes from mud and water is external purity).

कामक्रोधादित्यागः आभ्यन्तरं शौचम्

(Renunciation of desire and anger is internal purity).

In Dharma Sastras it is said :

प्रागुपनयनात्कामाचारः कामवादः कामभक्षः

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(Before Upanayana one can live as one wishes. One can talk and eat as one likes).

Even if one lives in the above said manner, after Upanayana one should follow all the rules. Righteous conduct is worshipping elders and the like.

अभिवादनशीलस्य नित्यं वृद्धोपसेविनः ।
चत्वारि तस्य वर्धन्ते आयुर्विद्या यशो बलम् ।

(Lifespan, education, fame and strength-these four grow for the one who salutes and serves elders).

सज्योतिष्या ज्योतिषो दर्शनात् वाग्यतः

(In the morning just before sunrise when stars are visible and in the evening before sunset, Arghya must be offered. After that, Gayathri Japa must be done. This is the Dharmic conclusion said in Dharma Sastras). During that period Gayathri Japa must be started.

जप्येनैव तु सिसंद्धचेयेत् ब्राह्मणो नात्र संशयः ।
कुर्यादन्यन्न वा कुर्यान्मैत्रो ब्राह्मण उच्यते ॥

(The Brahmana attains the highest through Japa alone Even if he performs or does not perform other actions, he is said to be in association with the Supreme).

Thus it is stressed that Japa is superior to all other means. In Bhagavad Gita it is said :-

यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि

(Of all the Yagnas, I am the Japa Yagna).

For achieving all these, sense control is necessary. Trying to control desires after enjoying them is equivalent to trying to quench thirst with salt water.

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न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

(Never does desire subside by enjoyment. Desire increases due to enjoyment just as fire grows because of ghee). That is why, it is said in Vishnu Purana—

यत्पृथिव्यां व्रीहियवं हिरण्यं पशवः स्त्रियः ।
एकस्यापि न पर्याप्तं तदित्यतितृषं त्यजेत् ॥

(Complete contenment is not obtained from earth, paddy, gold, cows or women. So, excessive desire must be renounced).

जितेन्द्रियत्वं विनयस्य कारणं गुणप्रकर्षो विनयादवाप्यते ।
गुणाधिके पुंसि जनोनुरज्यते जनानुरागप्रभवा हि संपदः ॥

Our ancestors have declared—

(Control of senses is the cause for humility. Due to humility, one attains superior qualities. Due to abundant superior qualities of a man, people love him. Due to peoples' support, riches are obtained).

That person who imparts this knowledge alone deserves respect. He indeed is an 'elderly person'. Just by age alone one does not become an elderly person,

न तेन वृद्धो भवति येनास्य पलितं शिरः ।
यो वै युवाप्यधीयानस्तं देवास्स्थविरं विदुः ॥

(One does not become an 'elderly person' just because one has grey hairs (it is due to age). He who, through young, is learned is regarded by the Devas as an elderly person).

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The power of the Guru, Who shows the correct way in this world and the next is Great for a person who has inferior knowledge and who does not know the way to Salvation. So Bhagavatpadal has advised thus :

भवति निरुपमस्तेन वाऽलौकिकोऽपि

(The Guru is without a parallel and is beyond the world). Gautama has talked about twenty-four Samskaras (Jata Karma, Nama Karna and the like).

He has also told about the following eight Atmic qualities :

दया सर्वभूतेषु क्षान्तिरनसूया
शौचमनायासः मङ्गलमकार्पण्यमस्पृहेति

(Compassion towards everybody, patience, freedom from envy, purity, freedom from laziness, auspiciousness, not finding faults with others, and being without attachment).

At the end he has said :-

यस्यैते चत्वारिंशत्संस्काराः न चाष्टावात्मगुणाः
न स ब्रह्मणः सायुज्यं सालोक्यं गच्छति

(He for whom all the twenty-four Samskaras have been performed but who does not have these eight Atmic qualities does not merge with Brahman. He even does not reach Brahma Loka).

So the saying that the full benefits of education will be derived only by the presence of these eight Atmic qualities (even though others may by absent) is clearly understood. With effort, these qualities should be cultivated.

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Are Sastras Essential For Guiding Us Along The Spiritual Path ?

Introduction

In God's creation, man has reached 'completeness'. In what has he attained 'completeness' ? It cannot be in size, since an elephant is several times larger than man. It cannot be in strength, as the strength of many animals is much greater than that of man. In experiencing sufferings ? This can only be partially accepted. No-

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body could have reached the limits of pain. Is it in his capacity to enjoy pleasures? This too we cannot agree. It cannot also be in wealth, since wealth is only what one desires and there is no dearth of wealth even for a deer roaming around in a meadow. Then, in what has man attained completeness? In his knowledge? Although emotions like pain, pleasure, desire, anger etc are common to man and beast, man has the capacity to acquire knowledge while beasts do not have such capacity. We cannot, however, say that beasts do not have any knowledge at all. They too have knowledge in matters related to eating, roaming about etc. If one has only these in mind when comparing man and beast, then, verily, there is no difference between him and the beast he is talking about. There are other higher things to be known than these.

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये···परा चैवापरा च

(Two forms of knowledge must be known-Para and Apara.)

Of these, the Apara knowledge is causative of pleasure in this world and the next. Silpa-Sastra, Science, Ayurveda etc are causative of pleasure in this world.

कारीर्या वृष्टिकामो यजेत

(May he who desires rain perform the Kareeree Yagna).

ज्योतिष्टोमेन स्वर्गकामो यजेत

(May he who desires Heaven perform Jyothishtoma).

In that the animals do not have such knowledge, man's knowledge is better. This knowledge is causative of pleasure, which has beginning and an end. In as much as man has knowledge of not only this world but others as well, man is superior. But this is like saying

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that the tip of Vajrayudha is better than a pile of husk. Hence, we cannot say that we are better simply because we have a knowledge of the earthly laws. 'Who am I? Am I this body? Or am I something different from the body? If I am different, am I mortal or immortal? Am I of the nature of pleasure or of pain?' The experience which is of the nature of an answer to these questions is called Para knowledge.

अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते

(Para is that by which one attains the Supreme Being)

Unlike other forms of knowledge, Para Knowledge does not create delusions.

निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात्प्रमुच्यते

(By knowing that, one is freed from the shackles of death).

Thus, Knowledge must be attained only by Vichara. Vichara connot be performed without a proper foundation. The distance of the earth from the Sun we measure only by mathematics and not with a foot-rule. Hence, we must bring into practice the teachings of the Upanishads. Keeping this in mind, Bhagavatpadal has said :-

वाक्यार्थश्च विचार्यतां श्रुतिमतस्तर्कोऽनुसन्धीयतां

(We must think of the meaning of the pronouncements of the Vedas. We must resort to logic in consonance with the Vedas).

One cannot know the nature of Atman merely by logic. Brahma Sutra says :-

तर्काप्रतिष्ठानात्...

(Since it cannot be established by argument.....)

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What we decide as right today may be shown to be wrong tomorrow.

यत्नेनानुमितोप्यर्थः कुशलैरनुमातृभिः ।
अभियुक्ततरैरन्यैरन्यथैवोपपाद्यते ॥

(What some intelligent people decide, more intelligent people show that differently).

Vacaspati's above statement is in our experience. Raghunatha Siromani's statement seems to support this when he says :-

विदुषां निवहैः इहैकमत्याद्यददुष्टं निरटंक यच्च दुष्टम् ।
मयि जल्पति कल्पनाधिनाथे रघुनाथे मनुतां तदन्यथैव ॥

(What intelligent people decide, as 'right', 'wrong' etc, that, I, Raghunatha, by my imaginativeness, show differently).

Thus, with Upanishads as basis, we must learn the Truth. By knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, one may reach the state described as :-

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम्

(That is infinite. This also is infinite). Only such a state can give one completness.

The necessity of the Upanishads

Should I desire the state of oneness with the Reality? For this, must I think of what the Upanishads say in this matter and concentrate my mind entirely on that? It is only natural that questions such as these arise. Everybody wishes to attain the desired and avoid what is not liked.

Although we often dislike them, we do not have a natural hatred for animals like the tiger and things like poison, because we fear not them but only the pain they

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can bring. So, we have natural hatred only for pain. Most of our activities are directed towards just removing this pain. If this pain were not there in this world, then there would not have been any Sastras giving knowledge about Atman. If there was pain but no hatred for it and if there was no necessity for an effort to overcome that, there need not have been any Sastras. If there was pain and if there was a desire to remove that pain, but if it were impossible to remove it completely, even then the Sastras need not have been there.

The impossible is of two types. The sky is eternal. We cannot destroy it by any means. If pain is like this, then it is not at all possible to destroy it. Even if it were possible to remove pain, if we do not know the means to do so, then it may me impossible to eliminate pain. This is of the second type. Further, if pain may be removed by means other than those given in the Upanishads, then also the Upanishads are not necessary. Nobody can say that there is no pain. Everyone is experiencing it. One is also trying to eliminate it. Sastras divide unhappiness into three kinds :

1. Adhyatymika 2. Adhidaivika and 3. Adhibhoutika. Adhyatmika sorrows are of two types—those connected with the body and those connected with the mind. If our body is not alright, then we get various diseases such as fever etc. Lust, anger, greed and avarice are causative of mental unhappiness. Such unhappiness is Adhyathmika, since due of these, there is pain to the body and to the mind. Pain from poison, animals, enemies etc are Adhibhoutika while pain from spirits etc and from natural calamities such as earth quake are Adhidaivika. We wish to remove all these forms of unhappiness. But we have not yet been freed from them. If we admit the existence of these forms of unhappiness and admit our efforts to be

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freed of them, if we could do it by means other than those given in the Sastras, then there is no need for the Sastras. To be freed from unhappiness the Sastras enjoin one to develop Viveka, Vairagya, the six qualities such as control of mind, a desire for liberation, and listen to the Guru and to the teachings of the Sastras, contemplate on Their meaning with one-pointedness and obtain knowledge. But this is not easy.

पराञ्चिखानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भू-
स्तस्मात्पराङ्पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्

(The Self-Born God made the outgoing senses defective. Hence one sees outside objects and not the inner Atman).

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम्

(I feel that controlling the mind is more difficult than controlling the wind).

It is possible to be freed from the Adhidaivika form of unhappiness by properly following the instructions of the Mantra Sastras and thus be freed from spirits, ghosts etc. It may appear that the Adhyathma Sastras are unnecessary as it is possible to be freed from Adhidaivika by easy means. However, even if one takes the prescribed medicines, one may not be cured of pain. It is not possible to remove man's desire by granting all his wishes. Even if mental pain were to disappear for a moment, will it not reccur the next moment?

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

(At no time is desire quelled by enjoyment. It only grows further like fire on account of ghee).

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Hence, even if we are freed from pain by the above means for a short while, we see that we cannot get permanent relief. Thus, the obvious means, though easy, does not give us the results we seek. Hence, people with discrimination seek Moksha. There is also another objection—Only the Sastras are there to remove unhappiness. Hence it is only proper that we find the cause of all pain and then seek to remove them. So we must find means easier than this. These are not as difficult as controlling the senses.

अर्के चेन्मधु विन्देत किमर्थं पर्वतं व्रजेत्।
इष्टस्यार्थस्य संसिद्धौ को विद्वान् यत्नमाचरेत् ॥

(If honey were available in the Arka tree itself, who will go to the mountains? If what is desired has already been attained, which wise man will try?)

Peace is also obtained on removal of sufferings. For example,

असौ मया हतः शत्रुः

(This enemy was killed by me)

To remove bodily pain, there are many ways suggested by famous physicians. Mental pains develop if the desired is not obtained. Hence the Adhyatmika sufferings related to the mind will be absent if the mind is provided with whatever it desires. On the other hand, peace obtained from freedom from sorrows is not as great as that got from fulfilment of desires. Freedom from Adhibhoutika form of unhappiness may be attained by following the means shown in the Neeti Sastras.

The proper conclusion however, is:

तरति शोकमात्मवित्

(He who knows the Atman transcends worry). In this manner, one frees oneself from unhappiness with Jnana.

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Becoming one with the Absolute by means of Jnana is the completeness mentioned earlier. The method of obtaining this Jnana is outlined in Adhyatma Sastra.

आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः

(Dear! The Atma must be seen. It must be heard of thought of and concentrated upon with one-pointedness of the mind).

When Bhagavatpadal appeared on the earth, the means outlined in the Upanishad was being ignored. In merely thirty-two years, He expounded the truth mentioned in the Sastras throughout the length and breadth of India. May He bless that all take to spiritual life and be benefitted thereby.

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Knowledge Of The Self

Introductory

We are endowed with certain powers which are not found in other living beings. Among such powers is the power of enquiry or power of discrimination (Vichara Sakti). Though this power is also manifest in animals, it is not found to a great extent. We are superior to animals only because of this Vichara Sakti or

* *Our Acharyal with His Guru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamigal.*

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power of enquiry. We are also endowed with the capacity to use this power of enquiry in the proper manner. This power of enquiry is made use of in one way or other at all times other than the period of sleep. This enquiry itself is cogitation (Manana). This is natural to man. We should determine the correct way of discrimination.

We are constantly enquiring about the necessary and unnecessary things for doing an action. We are attached to objects like the house etc. There is no object which is always dear to any one. Though objects other than us are dear to us sometimes, we dislike them at other times and even the opposite is true. Atma alone is dear to us at all times. Though tasty food may be pleasing in the beginning, it becomes a source of dislike at the end. We alone are dear to us. Our nature alone has been referred to as 'Atma' (Self). Commonly, we perceive three states (three Avasthas). They are, the waking state (Jagrat), the dream state (Swapna) and the state of deep sleep (Sushupti). In all these three states the perceiver alone is dearest to himself. There can be no greater fool than us if we analyse only outer things and not utilise the power of enquiry to analyse our own nature. There is no need to perform Vichara about known matters. 'Eating gives satisfaction' is an example of the above category. It is not possible to analyse about unknown matters. That we are existing is known to us all. But what is not known to us is the understanding of our nature. Thus, we are not completely ignorant of our nature; nor do we fully know it. (Thus, this is the matter about which we should do Vichara or enquiry). In order to do Vichara proper means are required. We will not be able to accomplish any action without proper means. Legs are necessary for locomotion. An aircraft is necessary to fly in air. Only after producing the aircraft can

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one fly in air. The aircraft must have the capacity to fly in air. Those people who could not make the aircraft themselves used those made by others. Thus the desire to fly in air can be fulfilled only if we resort to the above said proper means.

Thus, to accomplish any goal, proper means or Sadhanas are required. These means or 'Sadhanas' to obtain the desired result could be our own or produced by others. With those Sadhanas we can accomplish our goal. Works of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpadal provide means or Sadhanas. In His works, the nature of Atma and Anatma have been enquired into.

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु स्फुटतरं योऽसौ समुज्जृम्भते
प्रत्यग्रूपतया सदाहमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्नेकधा ।
नानाकारविकारभाजिन इमान् पश्यन्नहंधीमुखान्
नित्यानन्दचिदात्मना स्फुरति तं विद्धि स्वमेतं हृदि ॥

(That which shines forth independently and clearly in the three states—waking, dream and deep sleep; that which shines forth from the inner most recesses as the 'I' ness; that which is the witness of all modifications and ego—know that Atma which dwells in the heart and is of the nature of Supreme Bliss and Knowledge).

There is something strange about us. There is a great contradiction between our experience and our true nature as indicated by Vichara. Joy, sorrow and death are being experienced. Happiness and sorrows are of three kinds, namely, Adhyatmika, Adhidaivika and Adhibhautika. There seems to be no freedom from these. Thus

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the sloka may seem to be making fun of the 'beggar' by calling him a 'king'. But it is not so (because in the sloka it is indicated that we are devoid of all sorrows). Such a venerable work has been composed not just for fun.

शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः ।
तीर्णास्स्वयं भीमभवार्णवं जनानहेतुनाऽन्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥

(There are Good Souls, Calm and Magnanimous, Who, like the spring season, toil for the good of humanity, and Who, having Themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever).

Thus the reference in the previous sloka to our experience is not like making fun of the 'beggar' by telling him, 'You are a king!'. On the other hand, it is like reminding a prince who has forgotten his identity, 'You were a prince before'. The question as to how we, who are of the nature of Infinite Bliss, perceive the Universe has been raised by Bhagavatpadal Himself.

प्रज्ञावानपि पण्डितोऽपि चतुरोऽप्यत्यन्तसूक्ष्मार्थद-
ग्व्यालीढस्तमसा न वेत्ति बहुधा सम्बोधितोऽपि स्फुटम् ।
भ्रान्त्यारोपितमेव साधु कलयत्यालम्बते तद्गुणान्
हन्तासौ प्रबला दुरन्ततमसः शक्तिर्महत्यावृतिः ॥

(Even a wise and learned man who is clever and adept in the vision of the exceedingly subtle Atman, is over powered by Tamas and does not understand the Atman even though it is clearly explained in various ways. What is simply superimposed by delusion he considers as true and attaches himself to its attributes. Alas! how powerful is the veiling power of the dreadful Tamas).

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Avidya is the cause for forgetting our true nature

Ignorance of our true nature constitutes Avidya. Avidya has two powers. One is the veiling power and the other is the projecting power. Due to 'Avarana Sakthi' or veiling power of Maya, the true nature of a thing becomes hidden and thus we are ignorant of the true nature. Due to the 'Vikshepa Sakthi' or the projecting power of Maya, diversity is manifest in the object. The Jivahood, the notions, ' I am the enjoyer ', 'I am the doer', the ' I ' ness and 'Mine' ness are all due to the Viksehepa Sakthi only. This is the source of all miseries. This is what is termed as 'Samsara'. Let us analyse whether there is any means to get rid of this. Bondage arises due to Avidya. Jnana is required to remove Avidya.

Our knowledge is of two kinds—Prama and Bhrama. Just as nacre-silver appears like silver due to Bhrama (superimposition), so does the universe manifest. This is the Vedantin's contention. Let us give a few more reasons.

To remove this superimposition or Bhrama or ignorance, only Jnana is necessary. No action or Upasana (worship) can remove this Bhrama. Bondage is not one's nature. If it had been one's nature, it could never be destroyed It would not be destroyed even by Jnana or knowledge.

ज्ञात्वा देवं सर्वपाशापहानिः

(On knowing the Effulgent One, all bondages cease).

तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति

(On knowing Him alone can one escape from death (or finitude)).

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In these Srutis, it has been stated that Jnana alone can eliminate bondage. Let it be the sense of doership or the sense of enjoyership or let it be waking or dream state. That which is true should be present at all times. The waking state is not found in dream state and the dream state is not present in the waking state. Both these are absent in the state of deep sleep. Atma is present in all these states. (But these three states are not existing always).

आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा

(That which does not exist in the beginning and in the end is equally so in the middle).

That which is subject to birth and death is merely an illusion. No other light is needed to illuminate this Atma because It is Self-Effulgent. There is no need to know from others that we are existing. In the deep sleep there is bliss unstained by material objects. Is not a person necessary to experience this bliss? We resort to the deep sleep state forsaking the objects and activities. Thus is it necessary to admit that there is a particular kind of bliss in that state? What objects are present in that sleep? Which senses are functioning? If tha Atma is not of the nature of Infinite Bliss, how can the experience of bliss occur in deep sleep even though objects are not present? If that is so, is sleep alone sufficient to attain the Atma (Such a question may be raised)? Projection (Vikshepa) is absent in deep sleep. But veiling is present in that state. Only to remove this covering or veil is the realisation of the Atma necessary. (Thus, sleep cannot remove ignorance.) Which is the way to attain realisation?

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स्वस्याविद्याबन्धसंम्बन्धमोक्षात्
सत्यज्ञानानन्दरूपात्मलब्धौ ।
शास्त्रं युक्तिर्देशिकोक्तिः प्रमाणं
चान्तःसिद्धा स्वानुभूतिः प्रमाणम् ॥

(To free oneself from the bondage of ignorance and to attain the Atma which is of the nature of Sat (Existence), Chit (Consciousness), and Ananda (Bliss), Scriptures, logic and the Teachings of the Guru serve as the means. Besides these, one's own experience caused by intution also serves as the means for right knowledge (Pramana)).

By Scriptures is meant the Upanishads which speak as follows :-

स यश्चायं पुरुषे । यश्चासावादित्ये । स एकः ।

(He who resides in the human being and in the Sun is one and the same).

ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् ।

(The knower of Brahman attains the Supreme).

यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नुदरमन्तरं कुरुते । अथ तस्य भयं भवति ।

(So long as one perceives duality, there is fear).

Such utterances are found in the Vedas. This is Scriptural Message. Logic has been described above. Certain skills can be acquired through reading, practice and proper teaching. Silpa (Sculputre) and Science belong to the above category, but here, the words of Guru alone are not sufficient. Experience is also necessary. Just hearing the sound is not sufficient. Self-experience must arise.

सांसारिकसुखासक्तमहं ब्रह्मेति वादिनम् ।
कर्मब्रह्मोभयभ्रष्टं तं त्यजेदन्त्यजं यथा ॥

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(One who is attached to worldy enjoyments but says 'I am the Supreme', falls down from the Supreme as well as from actions. He should be ignored like a lowly person).

Fortunate is the man who has experienced the Truth. He alone is the expert in Vichara. Only in such a person is the power of enquiry commonly found in us perfected.

What will be the state of existence of such a one?

शान्तो दान्तः परमुपरतः क्षान्तियुक्तस्समाधिं
कुर्वन्नित्यं कलयति यतिः स्वस्य सर्वात्मभावम् ।
तेनाविद्यातिमिरजनितान् साधु दग्ध्वा विकल्पान्
ब्रह्माकृत्या निवसति सुखं निष्क्रियो निर्विकल्पः ॥

(Having controlled the mind and the senses and having freed himself from all actoins, patiently making the mind dwell in the Supreme and experiencing the Atma everywhere, having destroyed the darkness of ignorance by Samadhi (Equipoise), he lives happily, without doubts and actions, as the Supreme Being).

It has been mentioned that thinking of Satpurushas (Great Ones) is one of the causes for attaining higher good (Atma Sreyas). In reality, 'Sat' means Brahman. Those who dwell in Brahman alone are true Satpurushas. Such Satpurushas show us directly the import of the Vedic utterence given below—

ब्रह्मवित् ब्रह्मैव भवति

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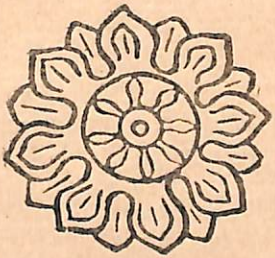
(The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself).

The word 'Sat' as applied to others is used only figuratively, ie., 'Lakshanika Prayoga' (Referring to a valourous person as a 'lion' is an illustration for 'Lakshanika Prayoga'). We should strive to become such a Satpurusha.

I concide this discourse contemplating on My Great Guru who is endowed with all the above said qualities.



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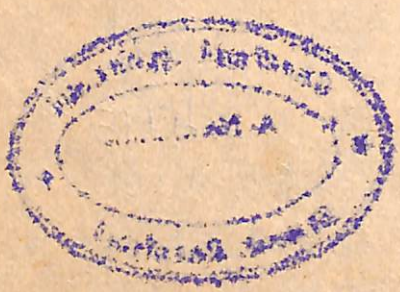

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